

Washington, DC - Today, three House committees announced their draft proposal to reform our health care system and ensure affordable, quality health care—a critical fix to an unsustainably expensive system that hurts families and puts American businesses at a global disadvantage. The committees on Education and Labor, Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means have worked together to present a uniquely American plan that reduces costs to consumers, protects current coverage and preserves the choice of doctors, hospitals and health plans. Congressman Charles A. Gonzalez (TX-20), a member of the Subcommittee on Health on the Committee on Energy and Commerce issued the following statement:

“I am pleased with today's proposal, and I am optimistic that through anticipated hearings and markups, my Democratic and Republican colleagues will work together to fine tune the landmark proposal. Today's rising health care costs are hurting families across the nation. With over 47 million uninsured, of which over 6 million live in Texas, reforming our health care system and offering a public health care option is essential for both our physical and economic well-being. I support today's draft proposal and will continue to stay committed to ensuring all Americans have accessible affordable health care.

“Our health care reform legislation would contain costs, while creating the avenues to provide our families with the care they deserve. Today's proposal will lower health care costs for American families and businesses by protecting what works in our health care system and reform what doesn't. The draft proposal works to reduce costs, offer a choice of doctors and plans, and guarantee affordable, quality health care for all.

“Reforming health care is an important part of every family's economic well-being and our economic recovery. We must act now, or within a decade we will be spending one out of every five dollars we earn on health care—a cost American families cannot afford.”

The draft proposal:

- Lowers costs for American families by -
 - o Putting an end to co-pays and deductibles for preventive care
 - o Capping annual out-of-pocket expenses so Americans are no longer driven into financial ruin by the cost of medical care
 - o Ending rate increases based on pre-existing conditions, gender, or occupation

- o Offering the group purchasing power of a national pool if you have to buy your own plan
- o Guaranteeing, affordable oral health and vision care for kids
- Provides greater choices like -
 - o Keeping your doctor and your plan if you like them
 - o Participating in your choice of a high-quality public health insurance option that would compete with private companies
- Offers stability and peace of mind with -
 - o An end to coverage denials for a pre-existing condition like heart disease, diabetes, or cancer
 - o The care you need with an end to lifetime limits
 - o The freedom to make job and life choices not based on health care coverage
- Improves the quality of health care in this country -
 - o Doctors--not insurance companies--will be in charge of health care decisions
 - o More family doctors and nurses will enter the workforce, at better payment rates, helping to guarantee your access to quality care

□

□

###